1. A surgical ablation instrument, comprising:

a first member adapted to be positioned adjacent a first tissue surface;

a first conductive element disposed on a portion of the first member and being adapted to communicate with a source of ablative energy;

a second member opposed to and movable relative to the first member, the second member being adapted to be positioned adjacent a second, opposed tissue surface; and

a second conductive element disposed on a portion of the second member and being adapted to communicate with a source of ablative energy;

wherein the first and second conductive elements are effective to transmit ablative energy therebetween.

2. The ablation instrument of claim 1, wherein the first and second members are movable between a first, open position and a second, closed position in which the first member is adjacent to the second member.

3. The ablation instrument of claim 2, further comprising an actuating member mated to the first and second members and effective to selectively move the members between the open and closed positions.

4. The ablation instrument of claim 3, wherein the first and second members are elongate and each member includes a proximal end mated to the actuating member, and a distal portion having the conductive element disposed thereon.

5. The ablation instrument of claim 4, wherein the distal portion of the second member includes a tissue piercing tip adapted to be selectively deployed into tissue.

6. The ablation instrument of claim 4, wherein the first conductive element comprises first and second electrodes extending along the length of the distal portion of the first member and adapted to be positioned adjacent a tissue surface, and the second conductive element comprises

a single electrode extending along the length of the distal portion of the second member and adapted to be positioned adjacent an opposed tissue surface between the first and second electrodes of the first member.

7. The ablation instrument of claim 2, further comprising:

a first conductor element extending from the first conductive element and adapted to communicate with the source of ablative energy; and

a second conductor element extending from the second conductive element and adapted to communicate with the source of ablative energy.

8. The ablation instrument of claim 2, wherein one of the first and second conductive elements is an active energy transmitting electrode, and the other one of the first and second conductive elements is a return electrode.

9. The ablation instrument of claim 2, wherein at least one of the first and second members is malleable.

10. The ablation instrument of claim 2, further comprising an insulative coating disposed around a portion of at least one of the first and second members.

11. The ablation instrument of claim 3, wherein the actuating member comprises opposed first and second handles, wherein a force applied to bring the first and second handles in contact with each other causes opening of the first and second members.

12. The ablation instrument of claim 3, wherein the first and second members are biased to the closed position.

13. An ablation instrument, comprising:

first and second conductive members opposed to and movably mated to each other, at least a portion of each conductive member having a tissue-contacting conductive surface, the first and second conductive members being adapted to be disposed on opposed sides of tissue;

first and second conductor elements mated to the first and second conductive members, at least one of the first and second conductor elements being effective to transmit ablative energy to the tissue-contacting conductive surface of at least one of the first and second conductive members.

14. The ablation instrument of claim 13, wherein at least one of the first and second conductive members has a distal tissue piercing tip adapted to be selectively deployed into tissue to position the first and second conductive members on opposed sides of tissue.

15. The ablation instrument of claim 13, wherein the first and second conductive members are pivotally mated to each other, and the instrument further includes an actuating member mated to the first and second conductive members that is effective to move the conductive members between an open position and a closed position.

16. The ablation instrument of claim 13, wherein the tissue-contacting conductive surface of the first conductive member has a surface area greater than a surface area of the tissue-contacting conductive surface of the second conductive member.

17. A method for ablating tissue, comprising:

providing a surgical ablation instrument having

a first conductive member having a tissue-contacting conductive surface and being effective to communicate with a source of ablative energy; and

a second conductive member movably mated to the first conductive member and having a tissue-contacting conductive surface and a distal tissue piercing tip adapted to be selectively deployed through a tissue surface, the second conductive member being effective to communicate with a source of ablative energy;

positioning the first conductive member on a first surface of a target tissue;

deploying the distal tissue piercing tip of the second conductive member through the tissue surface to position the second conductive member on a second, opposed tissue surface adjacent the first conductive member; and

communicating ablative energy through the tissue between the first and second conductive members to form a lesion segment in the target tissue.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the first and second conductive members each include an electrical conductor attached to the conductive member and the source of ablative energy.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the tissue is cardiac tissue and the first conductive member is positioned on an epicardial surface of cardiac tissue, and the second conductive member is deployed to position the conductive member adjacent an endocardial surface of cardiac tissue.